

Using a Now/Next Board– Information Sheet



What is a now/next board?

Now/next boards are a visual way to show a person what activity is happening now and next.



When should I use a now/next board?

A now/next board could be used in the following situations:

- To help support a person who does not understand routine, or the verbal language associated with a routine/changes/transitions.
- When a person understands photographs or symbols.
- When a person finds a visual timetable overwhelming and needs the daily routine broken down into smaller steps.



How do I use a now/next board?

- Make up a now/next board and a set of photographs or symbols that relate to the activities the person you are supporting does. You could make a board, or a flip book format. It might look something like this:



- Think about the size of your board and the storage of symbols/photographs as you may want to carry it around to different places. Use Velcro to affix the symbols/photographs, or a ring binder/book rings if making a flip book.
- Before an activity starts, prepare your now/next board with the correct symbols. Show the person you are supporting and use simple language to explain what is happening, e.g. 'Now is painting, next is choosing time'. Point to the symbols/photographs as you say the words.

- When you finish the 'now' activity, say '(activity) finished' and move the 'next' activity into the now spot, and a new activity into the 'next' spot. Tell the person you are supporting what is happening now and next.
- You can use a spot/countdown timer alongside a now/next board to help show the person you are supporting how long they have left of the 'now' task – refer to Commtap information sheet on spot/countdown timers.
- You can use traffic light visuals alongside a now/next board to help show the person you are supporting when the current activity is finishing and the new activity is starting – refer to the Commtap information sheet on traffic light visuals.
- Remember to use the now/next board for a mixture of different activities – not just activities the person you are supporting finds challenging.
- Keep verbal language simplified and to the point.
- Seek advice from a speech and language therapist if you are unsure whether a now/next board is the right strategy for the person you are supporting.